

SĀYYIDAH ZAINAB

THE HEROINE OF KARBALA.

BY

MOHAMMAD ALI AL-HAJ SALMIN,

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The Late Currimjee Jeewanjee.

Dedicated to
the lamented memory of the late
for his
to
Islam and

Author.

By The Same Author

THE HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD
Through Different Lights.

* * *

ALI: The Caliph.

* * *

FATIMA: The Lady of the Light.

* * *

HASAN: The Chief of the Youth of Paradise.

* * *

IMAM HUSAIN: The Greatest World Martyr.

* * *

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF
Imam Husain's Martyrdom.

* * *

MOHAMMAD: The Commander of the Faithful.

* * *

BUDDHA: The Great.

* * *

Etc. Etc.



Mohammad Ali Al-Haj Salmin
—Author, Journalist & Missionary.—

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To

The Sacred Soul and the Holy Memory of
SAYYIDAH ZAINAB – the grand-daughter
of the Holy Prophet Mohammad – who
endured untold miseries and afflictions for
Truth and Righteousness, I humbly and
respectfully place the following few pages
for the right-minded humanity.

The Author.

PREFACE.

In the higher plane of spiritual life, suffering has its eternal value. Suffering embraces sacrifice, and after the demise of the Great Prophet, when the edifice of Islam was threatened with certain disaster, and when its very foundation was rather rudely and violently shaken by ominous, stormy forces, a determined and solemn martyrdom, willing suffering and sacrifice, was found to be the only efficacious remedy to stem the onset and spread of the contagions of vices and of rank materialism and atheism. So, was re-established and reinstated the Faith of Allah through Husain's matchless martyrdom at Karbala. In this most tragic drama in human history, along with her beloved brother, as was divinely decreed, Zainab played a part, unforgettable and imperishable.

Her life was truly a series of sufferings and sorrows, which were borne by her, as became a noble woman and high-souled heroine, quite calmly, consciously and willingly. Character and culture ultimately triumphed over undiluted wickedness; Islam and the Prophet's progeny were saved. All her life-long troubles were thus finally duly compensated. Can we think of Husain's martyrdom without Zainab? What and where will be Islam to-day,

deprived of her great and inevitable part at Karbala and afterwards? In that desert and barren field, she was an oasis, a great centre and source of light, life and hope. Zainab! Thy name shall ever glow fresh and fragrant!

This tiny effort is just a humble attempt on our part to offer due homage and tribute to such a worthy, rare and noble character in human history.

Mahboob Manzil, Palton Road,
Fort, Bombay, 1, (India).

Dated: 27th Ramadhan, 1361 A.H.
9th October, 1942 A.D.

CHAPTER. I.

Birth, Parentage etc.

About the unparalleled and unfortunate Karbala tragedy the famous historian, Gibbon, in his classic work, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," aptly and significantly remarks-"In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader!" In that pathetic tale of matchless martyrs, headed by the Holy Prophet's beloved grandson, and Ali's proud son, Husain, it would seem that it was willed by Allah that his truly heroic sister, Zainab, should play no small a role on that memorable occasion. It was she who averted the worst, who boldly and calmly faced the darkest crisis, and who afterwards, unflinchingly defying callous tyranny, saved the progeny of the Prophet from the cruel jaws of death. Her ready sacrifice, her grim, steadfast stand unto the end in the cause of Islam and Allah, in the cause of Justice, Truth, and Righteousness, rightly entitle her to be called, along with her brother, the saviour of Islam - a heroine foremost among heroines and a model woman among women. To examine in detail her life, her rare and wondrous career and her noble character, is but an humble attempt to justify with true historic facts the above lines of praise and admiration.

Zainab was born in the month of Shaban in the year six Hijra. On this auspicious occasion of the birth of a daughter, Ali, the Caliph, was greeted with congratulations by one *Salman Farsi. But the congratulator was almost taken aback and stood puzzled when he noticed that the glad tidings, instead of making the parental heart throb with that innate affection and joy peculiar to them, filled the same with deep anguish. Ali, the lion-hearted, shed tears and wept bitterly. Salman persisted in knowing the cause of such unexpected anguish. The Caliph gave him an epitomised account of the Karbala tragedy that was to happen afterwards, in which, he, the wise one, foresaw that the daughter just born to him was destined to share its attendant woes. She was born to suffer; she was to be the daughter of afflictions. Foreseeing these, which father will not weep? No wonder, the apparent glad tidings moved the bravest one to tears.

And to the great Prophet himself, - so historical facts point out - was well known beforehand the inevitable martyrdom of his beloved grandson, Husain. How deep - stricken must have been his delicate heart at the very thought that his beloved grand-daughter, along with his beloved grand-son, was destined to share the woes of a great calamity! The news of the birth of his grand-daughter must have moved him very deeply. He must have kissed the new born babe with a sorrowful heart

* One of the early converts and companions of the Holy Prophet Mohammad.

and weeping eyes, knowing fully the dark days looming large ahead.

It is related that the mother of this child was in a restless state, was always sorrowful and distressed during the days of pregnancy. Such sorrows of a mother at such a time must signify a great deal, foreshadowing a life of calamity for the one yet to be born. Husain did go to his father, Ali, to convey the news of the birth of his sister. It is needless to say that the father's grief gushed forth afresh, and the son, the destined Karbala's martyr, was informed that his new-born sister, too was destined to share along with him a lot of woes.

The Prophet, Ali, and all the other elders were filled with grief on the occasion of the birth of Zainab - bewailing instead of rejoicing. In the forthcoming tragic incident she was to play a sacred and solemn part. Hence, the Holy prophet left a will saying that this grandchild was to be nourished and brought up with special care. She was considered to be the second Lady of the Light, next only to her grandmother, Khadija. If the one was not a little responsible for the inception of Islam, no small a force to inspire the Prophet, her grandchild was destined, through a life of suffering and sorrows, to contribute her mite for the preservation of the faith of Allah. During her life-time, noted and noble personages, those dearest and nearest to her, one by one left this world - her grandfather, the world's greatest Prophet, her beloved mother of sterling traits and

virtues, her father the Lion of Islam and the undaunted hero and soldier of many battles, and her two dear brothers. Born of such a family, to it and Islam, she brought undying glory and greatness.

The great Prophet named her Zainab. It means a fragrant and beautiful tree. It also means "Beautifying" or "one bearing afflictions." It is a name most significant, and quite apt to her. In that one word is contained the sad and sacred tale of her life. .

"Paradise lies under the feet of mothers."

"The best among you is he who is the best to his household."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER II.

Education, Character, and Culture.

Zainab was brought up along with her two elder brothers. Knowing as we do her noble parentage and that she had in her, marks of true culture and of a noble nature, it is needless to say that she received the best possible education at the hands of persons noted for wisdom and learning. To a child, the first, fresh, and pure fountain of knowledge, is the mother. And when it is said that Fatima, the Lady of the Light, the beloved daughter of the Prophet and Khadija, was her mother, and ideal mother to boot, who else could better mould her into a glorious heroine? Who else could be a better centre of culture and character? Who else a better source of inspiration and consolation?

As to the Prophet, who knew beforehand the great and difficult role that she had to play, and the many, sacrifices she had to make, and who knew too well her sincere love for her brothers and for the most sacred cause, Islam, what else could be more pleasing to him than to have always in his company this delicate darling child? Little wonder she soon became the repository of truth, justice, righteousness, and affection, rightly proving herself to be worthy of her salt.

In her cultural outlook and clear convictions she was an exact model of her father. Such were her speeches and her writings, her comments and criticism. Once, her father happened to listen to her commentary on the Quranic words, KA-HA; he explained to her the full significance of the context, in which was foretold what was to befall her and the other Ahlul-Bait at Karbala. Weeping she told her father that her mother had already informed her about this sad event that was to take place. She besought her father to pray to God to bestow upon her the courage to bear calmly these unavoidable calamities. She daily delivered lectures on the Holy Quran to the congregation of women. All have borne witness to the vast store of her knowledge. Her speeches and talks sparkled with pearls of wisdom. Women from distant places considered it a great pride and privilege to visit her. Her highly interesting and instructive theological discourses amazed even persons of deep erudition. Her debates at Yazid's court with her trenchant criticism and remarks have, perhaps, not an equal in Arabic language and literature.

- CHAPTER III.

Bereavements Begin.

Zainab was but five years old when her grandfather Prophet, passed away to eternal rest. When could she, the poor being then, realise about the great and irreparable loss to the Islamic world and about its far reaching future consequences? Soon another blow was in store for her. Fatima, her mother, was confined to bed after the Prophet's death. Her mother's constant illness and mourning must have affected much the child's mind, enveloped, as she was, in an atmosphere of gloom and sorrow. It is not surprising at all that Fatima, without much delay, followed her father to eternal rest. Zainab, a mere child, had thus to experience the hardest shock in her life, deprived of an invaluable protector and consoler so early. The life-long companion of her father, the best and the most blessed lady was no more. Such distress and bitter experience fell to her lot at such a tender age, and those must have naturally left in her their deep and indelible impressions. A life of woes had thus already begun for her, and she was destined to see its climax in the Karbala tragedy. Tradition affirms that her mother left a will for her, (her mother who foresaw the decreed calamity) to the effect that she should accompany her brothers through thick and thin. This daughter of afflictions as we shall see, quite truly, readily and willingly fulfilled the wishes of her beloved mother.

CHAPTER IV.

Married Life.

Having attained her womanhood, a proper match was sought for Zainab. Not a few were eager to marry her. Her father preferred his nephew Abdullah, son of his brother, Jaffar, and he was chosen as the partner in life for his daughter. The wedding was conducted in a simple manner, as was the case when Fatima was married. Ali loved his daughter and his nephew, his son-in-law, very dearly. He allowed his son-in-law to live with him at Kufa during his caliphate.

Zainab gave birth to four sons and one daughter. Islam's noblest heroine as she was, and boundless and deep as her love and regard for her brother—Husain was, she readily sacrificed her two sons on the battlefield of Karbala. Her daughter had inherited all her traits and virtues. Moawiah wanted to play a clever and diplomatic role by getting this daughter of Zainab to his son Yazid. Through this matrimonial strategy he wanted to terminate mutual differences amicably, and also to strengthen his vast Empire and position. Abdullah left the delicate matter for decision in the hands of Imam Husain. But Husain not being a slave to wealth, riches, and sovereignty, point-blank refused to comply with the proposal, and to his nephew, Qasim, in Masjid-i-Nabawy, was given Zainab's daughter in marriage.

Abdullah was a man of great learning, wisdom, and foresight. He had all the qualities and virtues of a noble statesman. He helped his father-in-law, Ali, most sincerely and to the best of his knowledge and abilities. The latter was very kind to him. He is counted among the greatest personages and authorities on the Quran and the Islamic traditions. He was a speaker and writer of repute, and was an acknowledged authority on Islamic theology, constitution, and law. Brought up by a person like Ali, of excellent merits and virtues, it was but natural that he should imbibe those traits and characteristics.

That this Abdullah, Zainab's husband, was favoured best by the Prophet himself, may be noted here, because he was the son of Jafar, Ali's brother, one of the foremost warriors in the cause of Islam. With Jafar, the hero of many battles, who when his right hand was cut off, continued the onslaught with persistent doggedness, holding the flag in his left hand and who undaunted, reciting stirring Islamic Verses, held aloft the flag in both the arms, until the last moment of his life; is it a wonder that the Prophet was greatly pleased? Quite naturally, he had a special affection for the son of such a valiant martyr. Through his blessings, Abdullah became very rich, but his bounteous and generous nature, carried to the limits, landed him in difficulties. If people borrowed money from others, they depended upon Abdullah's kindness for repayment.

CHAPTER V.

The Historical Background.

The great Prophet having completed his mission of Divine revelation, and having perfected his religion, left this world to seek eternal rest and peace in Paradise. He left behind him two things, his Ahlul-Bait and the Holy Book, the Quran, solemnly counselling his followers to hold fast to them. But then, rank materialism and atheism, kept down for a time under his mighty personality, naturally lifted up again its ugly head, proving a great menace to Islam. It was to root out once for all these cankers of vices that Husain's great martyrdom was divinely decreed, and it was also divinely decreed that Zainab should play a highly responsible and solemn role along with her brother. This heroic lady was quite conversant with the growing and menacing political and religious atmosphere. It is a long history of persistent struggle for supremacy between Islam and its inveterate foes, beginning with Abu Sufyan and ending with Yazid.

* "Setting aside Ali's rightful claim to the Caliphate, Abu Bakr, Omar and Osman were made the first three Caliphs." It would be only making matters worse and it would be only

weakening the position of Islam, if Ali were to interfere, putting forward his claim. He thought it best to keep aloof. He himself has explained the delicate position thus: * "I perceived my own right, as ordained by God and His Prophet, had been usurped by those who could put forward no claim to it. My eyes were full of tears as if dust had fallen in them. I meditated if I should bear the calamity patiently or should unsheath my sword. If I followed the first plan, the world would think that I was frightened of the Caliph's man power. If I chose to second alternative, Islam, which had not taken root, would easily have been eradicated and the people would consider that Ali was inclined towards worldly pomp. In obedience to the Prophet's dying words, I had to resign myself to the Will of God, and, as pigeons accompany each other, I joined them in their flight. I went up as they did, and came down along with them, so that I might guide them to the proper roosting."

In accordance with such a noble view, Ali ever readily helped Abu Bakr whenever he was consulted regarding important state affairs, and it must be said to the credit of Abu Bakr that he did not fail to recognise the superior ability of Ali. After two and a half years of Abu Bakr's reign, Omar occupied the position for ten years. Though Ali was given a chance to succeed Omar, one of the conditions imposed upon him was that

* 'Nahjul Balagha' by Ali.

he should follow the footsteps of the first two Caliphs. He could not of course, consent to this condition, so, Osman was chosen for the place. People got pretty disgusted with Osman's rule which lasted for twelve years. The infuriated mob attacked his palace more than once, and on one occasion a sword from among the angry crowd fell on his head, and he died.

Thus, the Caliphate fell vacant again. Chaotic conditions prevailed everywhere. None was willing to take up the position of the Caliph. So, Ali was requested to become the head of the Moslem world, and under the circumstances, he had to accept the same. It goes without saying that strict and just was his rule that swerved not a jot from the principle as laid down by the Prophet and from the righteous Islamic code. Ali's strictness naturally created dissatisfaction. Too true was his prediction about his strict rule. For, he said, "Now like thirsty camels you come to the clear fountain and wish to drink it by force, but mind you will not bear my hard and fast government in accordance with Divine order, as your minds have long been polluted with worldly desires."

Ali's dismissal of all the wicked governors, replacing them by God-fearing men, only augmented the prevailing discontent. Rebellions and conspiracies followed, and Ali was dragged into wars against his enemies. Under the weak rule of Osman, the Ommayade had already gained supremacy, and now their chief exponent,

Moawiah, proclaimed himself as Caliph at Damascus. Trickery, bribery, treachery and worst were employed to gain influence. Bewitched by worldly pleasures and luxuries, a good number of ease-loving persons showed their loyalty to him. They gathered round his banner to defy Ali, the rightful claimant. To make a long story short, the good Ali's governance was brought to an abrupt end by Moawiah's treacherous trick. On one morning as he was just prostrating in the Mosque for prayer, the poisoned sword of one Abdur Rahman-ibn-Muljim cut deep his head. It proved fatal.

Hasan, the son of Ali, succeeding to the Caliphate found the then turbulent state of affairs quite uncongenial to Islamic principles of governance, as clearly testified to by Ali's strict Islamic rule. So he rightly preferring to keep aloof, handed over the Caliphate to Moawiah, under the following conditions: Moawiah should not nominate his successor; he should act and rule in accordance with Islamic principles; he should guarantee peace in Syria, Iraq, Hedjaz, Yemen etc.

So began the Omade supremacy under Moawiah, who never meant, it is needless to mention, to abide the least by the above conditions, but was only further aiming at increasing his autocratic sway, by means fair, foul or otherwise. The most innocent, pious and non-interfering soul, Hasan was not left alone and safe. Soon, he was poisoned and killed by one of his wives, no doubt, instigated by Moawiah and his followers. That many,

belonging to the Prophet's family, were slaughtered in the most inhuman manner, is but another black chapter in this high - handed Omiade's rule, casting to winds solemn pledges and conditions. A letter of Husain to Moawiah, clearly and forcibly putting the dark situation, runs thus :

“Are you not the murderer of Hajar - bin - Adi ? Did you not slaughter like sheep the most pious and God - fearing men who looked down on every innovation in religion as a heinous crime and who cared naught for the criticisms of the wrongful critics ? You have killed a great number of those guiltless personages whom you had pledged to protect. Beware ! you have broken your word by the sharp edge of your sword.”

Hasan, who voluntarily relinquished his power and position, and who thought it best to lead a pious, secluded and non - interfering existence, was still down away with poison, for absolutely no fault of his. For all the strict and just rule of Ali, while in the very act of worshipping God, the assassin's vile and poisonous sword fell on his bended neck. Neither Zainab nor Husain liked the conditions under which they were forced to be under Moawiah's rule. They had to acquiesce. If Moawiah had broken every one of the pledge taken, Yazid, his son, nominated, by him to succeed to the Caliphate, quite contrary to the pledge, had already decided to see that Hussain was murdered. When his men had attempted on his life within the very sacred precincts of the Kaba and that

too, during the pilgrimage days, the wise Imam could see that he was threatened with the same fate that befell father and brother. He must decide for martyrdom; his most precious life must be sacrificed for the most precious cause. He must not allow himself to be murdered unaware. That would prove futile, hindering and weakening the great and Holy cause, and considerably strengthening the hands of unscrupulous tyrants. All these facts, political and religious were too well-known to Zainab. She was by the side of her father's death-bed and she had witnessed the death of her brother, Hasan. That the whole situation was assuming a dramatic development, that the worst would happen to her beloved brother under the tyrant, Yazid, and that she would have to play a part of no importance in the forthcoming tragedy was already deeply impressed in her.

"I leave two heavy things amongst you: the Book of God and my progeny. If you do hold them fast you will never go astray."

—Mohammad.

CHPATER VI.

Zainab By Ali's Death - Bed.

The wounded Ali, wrapped in a blanket, was brought home by Zainab's brothers. Zainab's feeling then can be better imagined than described. Her father was bathed in a pool of blood. The broken-hearted daughter could clearly visualise the forthcoming tragedy and those greater griefs awaiting her. Her father's dastardly assassination was but the prologue in the dark tragedy. The dying Ali very well remembered the impending catastrophe and what that was to mean to his sons, daughters and comrades. These thoughts must have perplexed him considerably. His daughters were to face distress, dishonour and disgrace.

The surgeon could give very little hope regarding Ali's recovery from the grievous wound. Zainab nursed and nourished her father with all the tenderness, care and love of an affectionate daughter. Ali was confined to bed for nearly three days. After two days, he was able to sit down. His beloved daughter placed before him two barley bread, with salt and milk. She well knew that her father never had two things at a time with his bread.

The murderer was arrested and was brought before the lion-hearted Ali - to be kind towards one who had so suddenly and cowardly and foully dealt the fatal blow, and to take no

account at all of the murderous deed, is nothing excellent. On the last night before his death, that great soul dictated to his daughters the following:

“Your father’s assassination is the beginning of the tragedy, which is to befall very shortly. Calamities are for the pious and virtuous person, esteemed by the Almighty. They have appeared in your family with all their stings, and they are to end with your sad life. I am pleased that I have sacrificed my life for God and His cause. I was not in possession of wealth and riches for sacrificing the same in His way. I have my dearest thing, life, which I have given up now for Him. I am happy, I am true to Islam and Muslims. I am going to your grandfather, proud of my achievement. Moawiah may be on the throne or may not be, but he has sown and strewn apples of discord, which will cost your life, or rather their lives, and of those dear and near to them. Do not desert your brothers at that critical stage. As I am going to Paradise, striving to follow the great Apostle, so, you ought to be firm-footed on the thorny path of trials—wordly wretches and dogs will betray your brothers and will side with the enemy. Mind, you do not renounce him, and be ashamed in the presence of your father and grandfather. But for my scrupulous regard for Islamic bans and saying of the Prophet, I could effect a complete extinction of such mean fellows and their mischiefs.”

They say that "Truth sits on the lips of dying ones." And how wise, true and pregnant are the above words, that reflect in a nutshell, as it were, the life and character of the Lion of Islam, who lived, moved and had his being in the ways of Islam. The succeeding chapters will amply testify and justify as to how Zainab, the worthy daughter of a worthy sire, carried out these solemn desires, completely identifying herself with the cause of her brother and that of Islam.

"Hasan and Husain are the chiefs of the youth of Paradise."

"Righteousness turns to whichever way Ali turns."

"My intercession, on the day of judgment, will be for those who love my 'Ahlul-Bait,' i.e., the people of the House of the Holy Prophet, his descendants."

—Mohammad:

CHAPTER VII.

Leaving Mecca.

To be ever in the company of her dear brother and to follow him like a shadow wherever he might go, and to do all that was possible to save her brother's sacred and most precious life from the callous clutches of Yazid's men, it is needless to state, that Zainab had made her grim resolve. Hers was a rare sacrifice, voluntary and willing, quite prepared to face the worst in the impending calamity. Could she, that noble daughter of Ali, ever forget those last words and wishes of her father,—not to abandon her brothers and the great cause?

Yazid, Moawiah's illegitimate son, having usurped the Caliphate which rightly belonged to Husain, sent a peremptory mandate to the Governor of Medina to see that Husain forthwith took the oath of allegiance to him, the new Caliph, and in case of refusal, he was to be beheaded without hesitation and his head sent to the court at Damascus. In such a hot and dangerous political atmosphere, to live a moment more was out of consideration; and to endanger life there, would mean further strengthening the reign of high-handedness. The good Imam's most precious life must be sacrificed in such a way that all injustice, high-handedness and religiousness would be swept away. For that, he, Husain, had to bide ripe and proper time, and in the meanwhile,

to safeguard himself was a supreme necessity. To a safer place Mecca, he decided to go. He left Medina on the 4th Shaban, 60 Hijra, accompanied by his family friends and relations. Zainab, it is needless to say, was with him. While Medina thus lost a great and inspiring personality the Meccans were only too glad to have the good Imam amidst them. Ladies paid a frequent visit to Zainab.

Though Husain had sought shelter and safety within the very precincts of the Kaba—too hallowed a place for bloodshed—Yazid's men may not spare even such a place. The sudden, dramatic turn of events was to deprive soon the Ahlul-Bait and their party of their secure and peaceful life at Mecca. From Kufa began to pour messages to Husain, inviting him thither as a spiritual leader. Despite these solemn invitations, the Imam, like the Meccans in general, had his own doubts. Zainab, too had her own apprehensions about the nature and conduct of Kufians. She knew full well their infatuation for riches and their flexible and faithless nature. She had her own serious apprehensions when her cousin Muslim Bin Aquil was sent to that place in advance by her brother in order to have a correct idea about the situation. That Muslim and his two innocent children met there with a very sad fate is but the gist of a pathetic tale, clearly proving the worst fears of Zainab.

In the meanwhile, Husain's life was not safe at all even within the sacred Kaba, however quiet

and non-interfering he may be. It was the pilgrimage time, and Yazid had already instructed his agents to utilise such an opportunity to put an end to the pious Imam's life. The foe was thus prepared to perpetrate the most sacreligious act within the most sacred house of Allah on a sacred occasion. Bloodshed that way, profitless and appalling must at all events be avoided. Zainab, ever on the alert, had noted the whole situation. She consulted her brother as to how far it would be advisable on their part to stay further at Mecca, when their lives were at stake at every moment. Husain fully agreed to this wise proposal from his sister, and decided to leave Mecca for Kufa, putting all his faith in Him and in His Divine help. Besides, how could he stay there, whatever might be his grave reasons, when he had received the following pressing letter of invitation from the Kufians :

“Everything has been arranged and an organised army is waiting for your assistance. Please make haste and come to us. You will be a criminal before God, if you do not comply with our request, for our aims are religious. It is your duty as an Imam to guide us in the path of God when we invite you.”

Zainab left Mecca along with Husain and his faithful followers. Officials at Mecca tried to prevent their project and wanted to place them under custody. To die or be killed within the sacred bounds of Mecca, was something unthinkable to this pious Imam. Somehow, dispersing

the army that tried to obstruct the way, the faithful band began their march towards Kufa.

Zainab, as a wayfarer, travelled for many days along with the caravan. She set on this journey according and in complete submission to God's commandments communicated through the Prophet. Did not the Prophet himself, her grandfather take refuge at Medina when idolatry and polytheism, reaching their heights, forced him to such a procedure? Islam was again in great peril, and this noble woman was but following the foot-steps of her grandfather to undergo all trials and sufferings, to save the honour of the Ahlul-Bait, and that of Islam.

Her father's soul was not enjoying rest even in paradise. While she was thus patiently bearing all the difficulties of this trying march, her brother saw Ali, their father in dream. Exhausted and overpowered by sleep, he saw a man riding a horse. He heard the man on horseback saying that persons are loosing distances and that death is following them in their close wake. Husain did grasp the true interpretation of this statement immediately. He got up and remembering his Creator, sent forth to Him his supplication for His unfailing succour. That they were to meet death for a righteous cause was affirmed by the person so seen in the dream.

Hearing about this dream from her brother tears of grief trickled down in quick succession from Zainab's eyes. She was travelling in the scorching heat of the desert.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Tragic News.

They had hardly crossed two or three stages from the place of this dream, when they heard the saddest and the most benumbing news—how Muslim, along with his two tender children met with cruel cold-blooded murder at the hands of the treacherous agents at Kufa. A messenger of peace and goodwill, sent in advance, thus foully done to death! Husain and party, quite unaware of such sad happenings, to be informed of these on the way; what a shock it must have been to all of them! It goes without saying that good Imam Husain was perplexed and unnerved beyond measure and was beside himself with overwhelming grief. He was almost on the point of abandoning his project, and was even seriously thinking of retracing his steps. But strange and inscrutable are the ways of Allah. Hope, courage, and fresh life, all these were then at that critical moment infused in him from quite an unexpected quarter. Observing him in this hopeforsaken state, his second son said thus: "Father! are we not in the right?" He replied, "By God! We have ever been in the right." "When it is so," rejoined the courageous and innocent young one, "What fear have we to give our lives for the right?" Who will not be electrified by such words?

Muslim's wife, now a widow, and his surviving children, helpless orphans, came thus under the guardianship of Husain. Zainab became a sort of mother to these children. She had to bear with patience this fresh calamity. She must have been bewailing bitterly, her heart ever sore and never free from anguish. This was another trying test for her from God, and sure, severer ones were ahead. For, coming events cast their shadows before. The ominous shadow was cast with Muslim's death. It proved the prologue of the great Karbala tragedy. Husain decided to face the transgressors, those wicked wolves in lamb's clothing. To these, besides the Ahlul-Bait, who were accompanying him, the Imam made known his grim resolve thus :

"You have witnessed what has befallen us. It is the nature of time to create constant changes. Virtue is vanishing fast and vice is surviving. A time has come when the believers cannot aim at Virtue but through death, and the infidel at his cherished Vice but through life. I warn you with the announcement that all those that lack the courage to endure the wounds of swords and lances should separate from our ranks and leave us to our fate."

'My secret-knower is Ali, son of Abu Talib.'

—Mohammad.

(Reported by Firdos Dilamy.)

CHAPTER IX.

Towards Karbala.

Misfortune never comes single, but in battalions. Husain's peaceful march towards Kufa was soon to be interrupted by Yazid's peremptory order to his general, Hur. The usurper rightly feared that the displeased and disgusted public would turn against him through the great influence of such a pious and worthy personage like Ali's son, who, at any cost, should be prevented from proceeding further. Hur was placed in a delicate position as he had his sympathy for the *Ahlul-Bait; and it is not to be wondered at that he hesitated to carry out immediately his wicked master's order, since in that scorching heat his thirsting men and even horses were given water to drink by one, a true embodiment of mercy and compassion against whom he was forced to proceed.

Having made another halt, Husain once more pointing out to his followers the grim gravity of the whole situation, said thus: "The form which the affairs have taken is manifest to you. The world has changed its colour. Virtue has vanished, leaving slight traces. This is the age of wrong and the followers of right have passed away. The time has come when the

* 'Ahlul-Bait' means progeny of the Holy Prophet Mohammad.

true believer has to separate himself from the mischievous mutineer and turn towards the Creator. Life with tyrants is hard to me, and I consider my death as martyrdom."

Grave was the situation and equally grim was the resolve of that great soul to face the worst, honourable death and glorious martyrdom, if need be; Hur's discussions and persuasions, therefore, proved futile. Those stirring, soul-thrilling speeches of her brother, the darkening situation, what a deep and indelible impression all these must have made in her! Her dearest brother, but with a handful of staunch followers, would have to encounter soon thousands. Inexpressible was her agony. She must bear all for the sake of the Ahlul-Bait and for Allah's cause. Destined to guide and accompany her brother through thick and thin, through test severest and hardest, that noble daughter calmly and willingly bowed to His inevitable and supreme will.

As advised by her, Husain at last conceded to a proposal from Hur, that is, to change his course of march and take another route; for wavering as was that general's mind, that innate tinge of goodness in him and his consequent sympathy for the Imam and his party cannot be gainsaid. As he was thus following and watching them, a messenger from Yazid rode up to him and handed over to him a peremptory order, which ran thus: "Arrest him, hold him fast and lead him to a waterless plain, unprotected on any

side by a place of refuge. I have commanded my messenger not to part with you, until you have successfully executed my order; he would then return and inform me of all your affairs."

The foe was bent upon obstructing the peaceful march of the holy band, and had determined to destroy them all without delay and without mercy. Muslim's martyrdom gave a foretaste of the approaching tragedy, and with Husain's departure from Mecca. Ominous dark clouds were gathering thick. The faithful few had now reached the desert of Karbala. The mere mention of such a place would have sent a thrill of horror in the mind of Zainab.

"My Ahlul-Bait resemble the Noah's ark: he who embarked on it became safe; and he, who turned off it, perished."

—Mohammad.

(May Allah's blessings be on him and his progeny.)

CHAPTER. X.

At Karbala.

At last Husain and party reached Karbala, the place of affliction and trouble, where his and his family's slaughter was fated to occur. Noticing the melancholic and gloomy atmosphere around, Husain asked the people there as to the name of the place, and was informed that it was called Karbala. Further, he then and there received the divine signal as to this place being his final destination. His horse suddenly stopped and refused to move on. Another horse was tried with no better result. A camel proved equally stubborn. The Imam decided to pitch his tents there.

He could very well visualise the dark tragedy that was to take place in that ominous spot. He foretold his men that his blood was going to be shed there; that his wives, children and relatives would be arrested and placed under custody; and that barren field would be their burial ground. Zainab, already in the know of her sad and grave role in the forthcoming tragic drama, listened to all these words spoken by her brother and it can be imagined how acute was the agony in her. Each and every word uttered by him pierced and scared her heart like sharp arrows. Exposed to trying affliction, she was to display there in an admirable manner the best traits in her character, her fortitude, perseverance and presence of mind glowing bright amidst all calamities.

It was on the second of Muharram that the party arrived at the field of Karbala. Hur and his soldiers had already posted themselves close to the bank of the river Euphrates, blockading Husain's party and their access to the river, preventing them thus mercilessly from getting water to drink. A waterless, dreary plain, scorching heat, and the river bank, blockaded and guarded, what else is needed to make their plight more miserable! In that callously barren spot, merciful Nature's waters flowed down free and abundant. What to say of callous human nature that deliberately disallowed drops of water to parched lips—tender ones, old persons, women! What must have been Zainab's feelings then? Naturally, many resenting this high-handedness, insisted upon an attack against the enemy. But the ever-good and forthcoming Imam prohibited the project.

Soon the field of Karbala was filled with Yazid's mercenary soldiers, numbering eighty thousand strong, under the command of Omar bin Saad. Against these thousands were pitched three score and ten, a sharp contrast in everything. Soul-force, righteousness, virtue, and truth, all these were ranged against mighty brute-force, vice, wrong and falsehood. Could not wise Zainab gauge aright the deep poignancy of the horrid situation? Armies after armies pouring down there, raising up howlings and clouds of dust; such mad scenes were constant torments to her, nay, inexplicable tortures. What were all

these for, but for the martyrdom of her pious and beloved brother, Husain, of his staunch followers withal? And how could she see with her own eyes and forbear innocent children dying of thirst, deprived of even a few drops of water to moisten their parched lips? Perhaps, when one reaches the extreme limits and heights of human woes, the heart becomes benumbed to all sufferings, is converted into flint iron, and is, therefore indifferent to worldly sufferings. So it was with her and Husain.

Amidst all the battlings and strugglings within her and all around her, that divine, immortal ideal for service and sacrifice for the highest cause, only the brighter glowed before her as tenser and darker grew the grim tragedy. On that memorable night the eve of that great Martyrdom, what sort of inspiring and sublime counsel did this noblest woman, this model mother, this ideal sacrificer, tender to her two little sons, while she was engaged in donning them in their prettiest garments? Impressing in them their supreme duty of sacrifice, she spoke to them these stirring words: "Mind not your ages, but think of your connections. Your paternal grandfather, Jaffer, was so brave that as long as he was alive, none but he could carry the Prophet's banner and he held it fast that it could not be captured by the enemy. Only once it fell to the ground, when both his hands were severed from his body, and he could no longer hold it. Your maternal grandfather, Ali, had established a

name unsurpassed by any. Victory had been certain, in whichever battle he was asked to appear. Be it known to you that just as the field of Mina, near Mecca is reddened with the blood of animals sacrificed at the Haj pilgrimage, so will the opposite plains be reddened crimson to-morrow, by the blood of the Prophet's family, and its supporters. Would you allow me on the day of judgment to present an honourable face before my mother Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet? This can only be done by your interception between your uncle and his enemies, by sacrificing your lives for his. Should you do so, I shall excuse your dues of my milk with which I nourished you in your infancy. I shall honour your blood by colouring my face with it and I shall glorify your bodies by laying them on the Carpet of the Prophet."

To continue the main thread of our tragic drama in which Zainab was destined to play the most prominent role, next only to that of her brother, Husain, we have to skip over many heart-rending incidents of those unforgettable ten days, when a handful of God-fearing souls, surrounded by a huge, merciless army, suffered the worst gladly and willingly—hunger, thirst and finally martyrdom unto the last, they, each of them, stood by the Imam and fell for him. That women and even children were thoroughly imbued with the highest spirit of sacrifice is a marvel of marvels, which only goes to show how Zainab and her brother wielded over all an influence, so

tremendous, rare, and truly spiritual. Who will not be proud of such followers who pledged their unswerving loyalty to their leader in words so emphatic and unhesitating as follows? "Let the morning dawn, and we shall show how to defend the son of the Apostle of God to the last... Never may God show us the day that we survive."

To Yazid's general, Omar bin Saad, the Imam showed the various letters sent to him by the Kufians, pointing out the purely spiritual aim of his undertaking. But Yazid could not brook the sympathetic interviews of his general with Husain. "Attack and destroy them all, the Ahlul Bait; don't allow them a drop of water" So ran the gist of his peremptory order, and his general could not but exclaim thus! "No slave could condescend to undertake the murder of an innocent soul like Husain." Persons like Hurr and others though they were under Yazid's service, guided by worldly gains, could not but be moved by the divinely nature of the Prophet's grandson.

With absolutely no chance to taste a drop of water, those in Husain's camp, young and old, women and children passed the seventh day of Muharram also. Oh! the parched lips of the tender ones, no water even to moisten their lips so dry! And mothers sitting by them in utter helplessness! The eighth of Muharram dawned, Husain could bear no longer piteous plight of children panting for water. With extreme difficulty, guarded as the river bank was by the

enemies, the valiant Abbas and his fifty men managed to bring at last twenty pitchers of water. After this, it is needless to mention that Omar made arrangements for guarding and blockading the bank more carefully and strictly.

On the morning of the ninth day of Muharram, the Imam saw a huge army advancing towards his camp. Mounting his steed he marched on to meet the advancing force. He must have his last say to them, as he thought it his solemn duty to try all possible ways and means to avoid bloodshed and slaughter. In his stirring address to them he stressed his position in the Islamic world as the grandson of the Prophet, pointing out to them their unrighteous move. Then he held a conference with Omar Bin Saad to impress upon him and his accomplices their sheer injustice in attacking him, though he had done no wrong. His words but fell on deaf ears. A grim struggle was inevitable. Sending a message to the enemy through Abbas for a night's respite for a solemn preparation through deep meditation and fervent prayer to face the worst, and having somehow obtained the same, he and his party awaited the dawn of that memorable day.

That night—that ninth night of Muharram—to Zainab and Husain, in particular, what a solemn, burdensome and anxious one it must have been! To be a fortress of patience and fortitude, to inspire spiritual courage and strength into

women and children, to counsel and console all, to do her best for her beloved brother who was to face the severest trial the next day, such were her taxing tasks, so tremendous and responsible. Like her brother, her noble spirit was hovering up above in the spiritual plane, spurning everything below, all worldly ties and attachments. She lived, moved and had her being in such spiritual world. In fact, on that memorable night, despite pinching thirst and hunger, every one of those tiny band of faithful followers lived and moved amidst a solemn, spiritual atmosphere, awaiting their bridal day of Martyrdom.

"Ali! Thou art my brother—in this world and the hereafter."

—Mohammad.

"Husain is of me, and I am of Husain."

—Mohammad.

"To whomsoever I am his Lord, Ali is his too. O God! befriend him who befriends Ali."

—Mohammad.

"Hasan and Husain are the Chiefs of Youths of Paradise."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER XI.

The Tenth Day.

Over Karbala dawned the tenth day of Muharram, the last day on earth for those tiny band of Martyrs. The battle drum was beating; the combat was about to commence. Even at that stage, Husain, thinking it his bounden duty to point out the rash procedure of the enemy, and ever anxious to avert the impending calamity, mounted on his camel, delivered a stirring speech in Arabic. All stood dumb-founded and made no reply. The sermon struck deep into the heart of the oscillating Hur, who with his three companions, went over to the Imam's side. But implacable proved Omar Bin Saad; he was bent upon shedding innocent blood. He discharged the first arrow, and the fight commenced in right earnest.

Into the details of that memorable day's grim struggle between a few and a huge army, armed with pure spiritual force on the one side, against mighty brute force on the other, it is not necessary for us to enter. Suffice it to state that the Imam's friends and relatives, famished thirsty as they were for three days, one after another faced the force and exhibited extraordinary strength and courage, killing not a few before they fell and died like true martyrs. For the sake of their most precious and dearest thing on

earth, for their Imam, women willingly sacrificed husbands and sons bearing those inevitable calamities with rare courage and calmness. Among the rest, the two remaining sons of Muslim, doing their best, had become martyrs. The sons of Hasan likewise attained martyrdoms. How could then Zainab still remain patient without sacrificing her two tender sons, her peerless possessions for the sake of her beloved brother, for the sake of vindicating his sacred and righteous cause. We have already quoted her thrilling and inspiring words of counsel and encouragement to her sons on that memorable ninth night. She was feeling quite restless, and she could be patient no longer. She must sacrifice her two sons without further delay. Her brother found it a difficult task to dissuade her from her grim determination and he had to give way. It is said that this noble mother showed no signs of distress, when afterwards her tender ones, but aged eight and nine, were brought to her dead. "No nation, no record of history can ever produce the example of a mother, so noble, sacrificing her own sons for Right and Truth, and displaying no fret or distress at the loss of such beautiful and obedient children."

That truly heroic mother's ideal of sacrifice, her great pride and highest bliss, all these were thus fully realised. Her noble offsprings have so worthily paid back the dues of a mother's milk, and her face besmeared with those juvenile martyr's blood, could not '*ipso facto*' exhibit the

least tinge of agony. All her agony and anxiety, inexpressible and unsuppressible, centred round her beloved Husain, who would soon be reduced to a helpless position, already deprived of most of his kith and kin within a few hours. Among the rest lay dead his son, Ali Akbar, aged but eighteen resembling the Prophet in every respect. And the last ruby in his treasure, his infant son died, in his own arm with a parched tongue. The cup of misery was full to the brim. The fatal hour, the darkest stage, was drawing nigh. What would have been Zainab's state of mind? It is something unimaginable.

"Allah only desires to take away the uncleanness from you, O people of the house-hold ! and to purify you a (thorough) purifying."

—Holy Quran (P. 22; V 33)

"Is there any one who understands Thy power and is not afraid of Thee?"

—Ali, Son of Abi Talib.

CHAPTER XII.

The Great Martyrdom.

Dreary, dark Karbala looked darkest that night. Husain was in a helpless plight. His last request to the enemy either to send him back to the place of his grandfather's grave to lead a peaceful life, or to allow him a draught of water, in case of their grim determination to fight against him, proved but futile. Then he had his last say to those standing before him. Cavalry, infantry, archers and lancers surrounded him on all sides. His sacred body was bleeding with countless wounds. Said one eye-witness: "I have never, before or after this incident, seen one wounded, alone, heartbroken with grief and bereaved of sons, relations and friends, making such a resolute dash with full presence of mind and charging the enemy with such courage and vehemence as Husain."

That night, with a bleeding heart, Zainab was attending upon her brother, so sorely and sadly wounded. All her pent-up feelings of agony gushed forth in uncontrollable tears when she heard her brother reciting three or four times the following deeply touching and reflective verse: "O Time! Woe to thee! What an unfaithful friend thou art! In the morn and in the eve there are slaughtered many by thy hands. O

thou Time! You do not take any reward nor give any concession to anybody. Surely everything is in the hands of Allah! Every living man is walking on the path of death!" Grief-stricken beyond measure, she said: "O my brother, the successor of the past and the cooling object of my eyes, and the token of the present living progeny of the Holy Prophet! I wish I would have been dead ere long." And the wise Imam consoled her in the following words: "My sister! Let not Satan carry away thy endurance. Surely the people of Heaven shall die and the people of the earth shall not remain alive and everything is perishable except His face. To Him the order returns and everything will return unto Him. Where is my father? Where is my grandfather, those that were better than I and in whom I find my best example? I make you swear that if I die, thou shalt not tear garments nor shalt thou scratch thy face."

Says Ameer Ali: "Wounded and dying he (Husain) dragged himself to the river-side for a last drink; they turned him with arrows from there." Gibbon writes: "Alone, weary, and wounded, he seated himself at the door of his tent. As he tasted a drop of water, he was pierced in the mouth with a dart; and his son and nephew, two beautiful youths were killed in his arms. He lifted his hands to Heaven - they were full of blood and he uttered a funeral prayer for the living and the dead."

And when we shudder even to mention how the murderous crew rushed upon the dying hero, who

had already, faint with loss of blood, sunk to the ground, and how they pitilessly cut off his head and thence trampled on his body, desperate agony, it is needless to state, reached its climax in Zainab. She had lost the priceless gem of her heart ; she had sustained an irreparable, loss.

“ O Lord! Pardon such sins of mine as impede my prayers from reaching Thee.”

—Ali, son of Abi Talib.

“ O Lord ! Pardon such sins of mine as bring down Thy curse or punishment.”

—Ali.

“ The highest aspiration of wild beasts is to be oppressive over others.”

—Ali.

CHAPTER XIII.

After The Tragedy.

So Zainab had seen and experienced the worst. The most foul and callous hand had done the most sacreligious deed, and there lay beheaded her brother, a priceless treasure of her heart, her very life and soul. To say that at such a sight her heart burst and bled is rather euphemistic. It is something impossible even to describe in some way about those violent storms of emotions that were then raging within her.

The women of the Ahlul-Bait, who had already suffered unimaginable distress and agony along with their men and children, and who had sacrificed all of them in the Holy cause, had to experience fresh calamities and miseries. But it must be said to their high credit, pride and glory, that they maintained to the last their true dignity and womanhood and the great name and nobility of the Prophet's family. Why not, when guided and inspired by such flowers of selfless spirits like Zainab and Ummi Kulsum! It was little wonder that they put to utter shame Yazid himself for having dishonoured and distressed them, for having taken them as captives to Kufa in the most disgraceful way. He was compelled to see that they were escorted back to Medina in a manner befitting their status and position. We shall see presently how in the series of dramatic incidents that followed the Karbala tragedy, Zainab's personality and influence played quite a

significant part, as it was so in those memorable days at Karbala.

Having murdered Husain, those agents of tyranny and oppression hurried towards Husain's tents, where they carried on a shameless loot. Even the hoods of women were not spared, what to say about their other apparel. The very skin, on which the surviving sickly Imam, Zain-ul-Abidin, was lying was not spared. They set fire to the tents. What a confusion and consternation this sort of vandalism and barbarism must have created in the minds of those helpless ones, who feared they might be burnt alive, and who ran hither and thither, knowing not what to do ! At this awkward juncture, Zainab, maintaining that perfect presence of mind, was able to avert the tragic situation by bringing all together at a convenient open space. It was with great difficulty that she managed to bring under custody the invalid Imam—no small service to Islam.

In that sad plight, on the open field at Karbala, exposed in every sense and surrounded by those heartless tyrants, Husain's people spent two full nights, with none to assuage or alleviate their distressed condition, though there were many to tease and torment them in all possible ways. Leaving the dead bodies of the martyrs as they were, without caring to bury them but stripping them of even little things, the enemy, on the third day, started for Kufa, taking with them the distressed family, who were mounted on camels.

Those noble women of the Prophet's family were brought to Kufa with as much disgrace as possible. Writes an eye-witness :

“I was present in Kufa when the pillaged family of Husain reached there. Imam Zain-ul-Abidin was seated on the bare back of a camel, bound in chains. His thighs were bleeding and he was uttering “O cursed people! May not the Lord moisten your soil with showers! You have not paid any regard to our grandfather the Prophet. What reply can you give, if we and the Prophet jointly question you on the Day of Reckoning? You carry us on camels, without either litters or saddle cloth on them. You treat us like ordinary people as if we are not the Founders of Religion. O Omiades! What does your silence mean at our distress and hardship? Why do you not reply to our cries? Out of joy you clap your hands behind us, and you tease us on the way. May you be destroyed! Was not our grandfather, the Prophet, who saved the world from falling into the pit of ignorance?”

Under such circumstances, the inspiring personality and character of a noble and selfless woman like Zainab had no small healthy and healing influence over the distressed party. Now that Husain was no more, the whole responsibility devolved upon her. What a monument of patience, courage, and presence of mind we see in her! If the Karbala tragedy truly and finally turned out to be a triumph for suffering ones, a

triumph for justice and righteousness, putting into utter shame and ignominy undiluted tyranny, a good deal of credit must go to Zainab, the undoubted heroine of Karbala. We shall note in the next chapter how she, with her high character and culture, outwitted the strongest and the stoniest ones.

WHO IS A TRUE MUSLIM ?

“ A real Muslim is he who is strong (firm) in faith, wise but kind, true in belief, knowing and forbearing, mindful in ease, considerate in rights, temperate in wealth and contented in poverty, gentle in (using) power, regardful in friendship and patient in misery. Neither anger can vanquish him nor excitement can baffle him, Selfishness impels him not, abundance of wealth disgraces him not, and he becomes not mean for desire or greed. Always brave and steady he will run to rescue the oppressed and will be kind to the feeble. He is neither niggardly nor extravagant, forgives the faults and overlooks what the ignorant do, his own self suffers pain at his hands, but to the world he affords pleasure.”

—*Imam Hasan.*

CHAPTER XIV.

The Final Phase.

Prisoners of Karbala tragedy were brought to Kufa by the tyrant and victorious general, Omar-bin-Saad; the former entered the city in a pitiable state, while the latter entered the same in flying colours, with all undeserving pomp and pride. The very striking contrast was enough to evoke a great sympathy in all towards the aggrieved and innocent party, who were carried through thickly populated places of the city. And Zainab's address to the populace was stirring and telling. Her courageous exposition of black deeds and impeachments of wrong doings were unassailable and incontrovertible. Says Bashir—bin Karim: "I have never come across a lady more fluent, having such a command over Arabic language. When the prisoners were brought in the city, people gathered around them with sympathies in their hearts. They were mourned to witness such affairs caused through ruling officials, who were making merriments at their glorious success. Melodious songs of music were heard rending the sounds of the general public. Zainab, the daughter of Lion-hearted Ali, thundered amongst the noise and silenced all. During the silence she delivered this pathetic address: "Oh disloyal inhabitants, you deceived your holy Imam, grandson of the Prophet. Now you weep at tragic affairs. You have committed wrongs

through your greedy nature and now repent, weep and bewail. May this bewailing go on with you for ever. You pledged faith with the Prophet and Almighty, but shattered it to pieces at the martyrdom and bloodshed at Karbala. Your oaths were evident deception designed for Holy Imam and his near and dear ones. You have only evil traits like envy, backbiting and greed. Lust of gold and silver blinded you. Love of worldly gains and riches deprived you of wisdom and understanding. Your evil self deceives you and God is indignant upon you; but you will have to realise your follies. You cannot escape from wrong done to Prophet's grandson and his relatives, the grandson who is the chief of youths in Paradise. He was a guiding star, a true leader and a real benefactor of humanity. He was to cure all your ills, to purify your life and soul. You have committed an irreparable and irretrievable tragic deed unknown in human history, and consequences of this folly will prove too harsh for you to bear. You have to bear in mind that God's mill grinds slowly. Your evil attempts are to bear fruit very shortly. You have assassinated the progeny of the great Prophet, and his grand and-great grand daughters are carried as prisoners under custody without veil. What an insult and what bloodshed! What heights of injustice and tyranny towards the holy ones of Islam! You will find no helper, no protection on the Judgment day. Do not be proud of a few days' luxurious and free time. God does not worry about haste."

A great gathering was listening to her address. People felt ashamed ; hearing her discourses and arguments, they were not a little surprised. It appeared as if Ali himself was speaking in an indignant manner with his lion-like roaring. These touching matters expressed in such a telling way brought tears in the eyes of the audience. They wept bitterly for their misdeeds and sheer indifference. It was admitted by one and all that such an impressive and heart-rending speech was never delivered in gatherings of opponents.

An old emaciated man came out of the gathering, weeping and bewailing, and said that the Prophet's progeny would last for ever, pointing out that their afflictions would be lessons for generations to come. "World may shower troubles and calamities upon you, but your greatness will ever be fresh in the minds till the Judgment day."

"Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER XV.

At the Court of the Governor.

Prisoners were brought to the court of Ziad, the governor of Kufa, who guided the whole scheme at Karbala. To such a tyrant the ruin and utter misery of the Prophet's family seemed to be an occasion for special rejoicing; for, the whole place wore a gala atmosphere, and it must have exasperated the feelings of Zainab beyond measure—adding gravest insult to deepest injury. The governor himself was occupying an exalted place, with armies fully armed standing on both sides. There were also present provincial lords and high officials. Zainab was witnessing all these. Her brother's head was exhibited in a casket. Those officials who had the temerity and heartlessness to bring that head there were, of course, greedy and covetous. For having made short work of a person, who was pious and gentle, who was most perfect and exalted in parentage, they were eagerly expecting to fill their pockets with gold and silver. When the murderer of Husain struck with a cane the great martyr's head, (unpardonable callousness in excelsis) it can more or less be imagined in what a pitch and emotion Zainab then was, witnessing, as she did, such an inhuman action with her own eyes. How could she keep silent! Even those who read about these dark incidents cannot help being moved to tears. That the beloved sister of the martyr, even on that heart freezing occasion, showed a

rare and marvellous patience, only too clearly shows her deep culture and high character.

Then there ensued the following conversation between Ziad and Zainab.

Ziad: "Who are you to insult and shame us?"

Zainab: "Praise be to God who granted dignity and honour through the Great Prophet. He purified us from worldly ills. God degrades every transgressor and thinks him a liar, and we are not of them. We cannot be counted in the same category."

Ziad: "Look what God has done with your brother."

Zainab: "Whatsoever God has done is a lesson for the world. He has done it for the best. Mohammad's progeny consists of holy personalities. He has conferred martyrdom to draw him near and raise him in the next world. You may be making haste to fulfil your heart-felt desires, but God will soon put you to the test to give accounts for action of oppression. Now you can think for yourself as to who will get salvation on that day."

Ziad got indignant at such a frank and straight-forward answer. He ordered to put her to death. Omar bin Haries said: "O Amir! She is a woman and her words cannot be taken to be punished for that."

Ziad: "We get appeasement and satisfaction to our hearts by the assassination of Husain and the renegade Ahlul-Bait."

Zainab: "I declare by God that you killed weak persons, unveiled our ladies, and cut off the tree from the root, the tree laden with fruits and leaves. If it means satisfaction to your heart, get your wishes realised."

Ziad "This woman speaks flowery language like her father. Ali certainly was a great poet and a brave soldier."

Zainab: "It does not matter if my language is rhetorical and impressive, but it is surprising that a person who knows that his actions are recorded and that for the same he is sure to be punished, should murder the Holy Imam."

It was a talk between a man and a woman, between a prisoner and a free man. A sword's wound may be cured, but wounds of words can never be cured. Now Husain's sister was being attacked with bitterest words, and that too, while she was in a miserable plight. Those utterly false charges framed by Ziad against Husain and his relatives could not stand before her strong arguments. It was but the Divine will that they had to undergo all these sufferings and disgraces in the world, and surely they were to be compensated with highest rewards in the next world. Ziad and his officials did not make any distinction between right and wrong, justice and

oppression, and virtue and vice. Love of wealth, as pointed out, blinded them to all ethical rules and noble human actions. They but aimed at their own selfish rise to power and prestige through the martyrdom of Husain. They murdered him in cold blood, without caring a jot to the dictates of conscience. They deceived themselves and they tried to deceive the whole world, and their attempts proved futile. Zainab exposed the whole affair before the governor, and lucid was her exposition regarding the high place accorded to ethics in religion and life. Who else could be a better exponent of the deep philosophy underlying Husain's martyrdom? From Karbala to Kufa and thence to Damascus, what all disgraces and further sufferings, the good ones underwent? And their return, how different? That was a crowning victory to the virtuous, and such a successful termination of the tragedy points out the great part played by the heroic woman, Zainab.

Zaid was defied several times in arguments by Zainab. He did not possess the knowledge and understanding enough to compete with or oppose her. Moreover, truth must have always the upper hand. She could oppose the oppressor with a spirit indomitable. He was at his wit's end to speak or discuss with her. At the same time, he was dead to all sense of shame and honour. When Zainab's brother's son, Sajjad cornered the governor with arguments, the latter's wrath was roused to such a pitch that he ordered his courtiers to put him to death. This noble lady, his aunt,

interposing said that she too should be murdered along with him. Seeing this rare spirit of sacrifice, even Ziad was forced to express thus: "I have not seen more strong love in relatives as I find here. Aunt is ready to sacrifice her own life for her nephew."

From Kufa, the heads of Karbala's martyrs and the Prophet's family were taken to Yazid's court at Damascus as it was feared that the stirring speeches of the surviving Imam and those of Zainab and Ummi Kulsoom would create a revolution against Yazid's government. In fact, we have already noted, how all attempt of the enemy to convert their black deeds into a great triumphal affair proved *ipso facto* futile. Against such an eye-wash and white-wash, there were the heads of martyrs and distressed and dishonoured soul of the Ahlul Bait. Such sights and stirring speeches drew sympathy even from Jews and Christians. The revulsion of feelings against the oppressors was steadily and surely increasing, and popular indignation had reached its menacing stage.

The journey from Kufa to Damascus was covered in twenty days, the aggrieved party attracting more and more the sympathy of the public, wherever they halted. In what a bitter anguish Zainab was! How could she forget about her brother's saddest end, his body mercilessly cut to pieces? And his head now, like great trophy of victory, was carried before her very eyes, from

place to place. She had to console, unconsolable as she was, the only living son of her brother. Once he was deeply immersed in the saddest reflection about his lonely and miserable position bereft of kith and kin, who had died suffering much. Then Zainab had to advise him as to the supreme necessity of keeping patient, adding that all these things were predestined. She explained to him the deep purport of life and martyrdom.

At Damascus, too, the distressed family was able to extract that legitimate sympathy from all.

The Ahlul-Bait prisoners were taken to Yazid's court ; and before a great gathering Zainab delivered a very wise discourse, and she vehemently despised the assumption of power and wealth through unspeakable horrors. This was a truly heroic and highly courageous act on her part. For, a helpless prisoner as she was in the clutches of a merciless foe, she spoke out her mind straight before the very foe, caring but for truth, justice and righteousness, and least fearless of consequences. Though Yazid mocked at the innocent victim and insulted them beyond limit with his unpardonable revengeful spirit, he could not stand searching arguments based on true facts. That martyrs are never dead, that they are always divine and immortal and that adequate provisions are made for them in the next world, since they give and sacrifice their life for divine cause, were clearly explained to him by the daughter of Ali. Without fear, she pointed out to him how he was responsible for all these atrocities.

Altogether, Yazid found his position too hot. Even his wife, sorely feeling for the women of Husain's family, scolded him outright. She was horror-struck to see Husain's head in the casket, and showed not a little indignation at her husband for his abominable action, and she got divorced from him. Yazid tried to please the aggrieved members with a show of special favours and regard. He even vainly tried to point out that he was not responsible for the Imam's murder. He returned to the Ahlul-Bait, the pillaged articles and also the heads of martyrs. He was forced to admit his guilt. He could not escape the pertinent questions of Zainab and Zainul-Abidin. What else is needed to show how the tyrant totally failed to achieve any thing save ineffaceable ignominy and damnation? On the other hand, success in its high moral sense, immortal place and fame, were all vouchsafed to the heroes of Karbala. In this grand triumph of martyrdom, from start to finish, we can now more or less realise how inevitably Zainab had to play the most responsible part, bearing herself willingly and boldly the lion's share of all these miseries. The events, especially after the Kerbala tragedy, would have made matters worse, but for her. She saved and preserved Islam and everything connected with it.

Those noble ladies and the Imam were sent back to Medina with due honour, Noman-bin-Basheer escorting them with five hundred horsemen. Contrast their distant journey back to

Medina with their distressed and dishonoured position as captives, when they were taken from Kerbala to Kufa, and thence to Damascus. At Kerbala, the holy band spent a few days in deep mourning, after giving due burials to the bodies of the martyrs. From there they proceeded to Medina.

Zainab could not survive at Medina for a long time. Was not such a trying tragedy quite enough to take the life out of her? It is a great thing she lived to see that affair, after all, terminated quite successfully, honourably and favourably. She lived but a few months more after the tragedy lamenting over the past. Her role in the history of humanity is something unique and unparalleled. In the firmament of Islamic history and faith, she shall ever remain a resplendent star - nay, the queen of Light, Life and Hope.

"Do not despise politeness, though it be only a smile unto the face of thy brother."

—Mohammad.

"When you prepare a soup, put a little more water into it so that you may give a part of it to your neighbour."

—Mohammad.

"Avoid sitting on the wayside. If at all you wish to sit, then give it justice: Keep your eyes down-cast; don't try to harm anyone; invite people to that which is good; forbid the wrong; turn towards the afflicted and guide people to their destination."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER XVI.

The ^{*}Al-Widaa of Imam Husain.

Husain: "I am sore distressed at the unkind treatment received at the hands of the cruel heavens. Pitiful tyranny is exercised towards me by a cruel, unbelieving army! All the sorrows and troubles of this world have overwhelmed me! I am become a butt for arrow of affliction and trouble. I am a holy bird stripped of its quills and feathers by the hand of the archer of tyranny, and am become, Oh friends, utterly disable and unable to fly to my sacred nest. They are going to kill me mercilessly for no other crime or guilt except that I happen to be a prophet's grandson."

Shimr (challenging him): "Oh Husain, why dost thou not appear in the field? Why dost not thy majesty show thy face in battle? How long art thou going to sit still without displaying thy valour in war? Why dost thou not put on thy robe of martyrdom and come forth? If thou art indeed so magnanimous as not to fear death, if thou carest not about the whistling sounds of the arrows when let from the bow, mount thou, quickly, thy swift horse named Zul Janah, and deliver thy soul from so many troubles. Yea come to the field of battle, be it as it may. Enter soon among the women, and with tears bid them a last farewell; then come forth to war, and show us thy great fortitude."

* This Arabic word means the sad farewell.

Husain (talking to himself): "Although the accursed fellow Shimr will put me to death in an hour's time, yet the reproachful language of the enemy seems to be worse than destruction itself. It is better that the foe should sever my head cruelly from the body, than make me hear these abusive words. What can I do? I have no one left to help me, no Kasim to hold my stirrup for a minute when about to mount. All are gone! Look around if thou canst find anyone to defend the descendant of Muhammad the chosen of God—if thou canst see any ready to assist the holy family of God's Prophet! In this land of trials there is no kind protector to have compassion on the household of the Apostle of God, and befriend them."

Zainab: "May I be offered for the sad tones of thy voice, dear brother! Time has thrown on my head the black earth of sorrow. It has grieved me to the quick. Wait, brother, do not go till thy Kasim arrives. Have patience for a minute, my Ali Akbar is coming."

Husain (looking around): "Is there one who wishes to please God, his Maker? Is there any willing to behave faithfully towards his real friends? Is there a person ready to give up his life for our sake, to save us, to defend us in this dreadful struggle of Karbala?"

Zainab: "Oh Lord, Zainab's brother has no one to assist or support him! Occasions of his sorrows are innumerable, without anyone to

sympathise with him in the least ! Sad and desolate he is leaning on his spear ! He has bent his neck in a calamitous manner ; he has no famous Ali Akbar, no renowned Abbas any more !”

Husain : “Is there any one to pity our condition, to help us in this terrible conflict of Karbala ? Is there a kind soul to give us a hand of assistance for God’s sake ?”

Zainab : “Brave cavalier of Karbala, it is not fitting for thee to be so hurried. Go a little more slowly ; troubles will come quickly enough. Didst thou ever say thou hadst a Zainab in the tent ? Is not this poor creature weeping and mourning for thee.”

Husain : “Dear sister, thou rest of my disquieted, broken heart, smite on thy head and mourn thou thousand-noted nightingale. Today I shall be killed by the ignoble Shimr. Today shall the rose be turned out of its delightful spot by the tyranny of the thistle ; dear sister, if any dust happens to settle on the rosy cheeks of my lovely daughter Sukainah, be pleased to wash it away most tenderly with the rose-water of thy tears. My daughter has been accustomed to sit always in the dear lap of her father whenever she wished to rest ; for my sake, receive and caress her in thy bosom.”

Zainab : “Oh thou intimate friend of this assembly of poor afflicted strangers ; the flaming effect of thy speech has left no rest in my mind. Tell me what have we done that thou shouldst

so reward us? Who is the criminal among us for whose sake we must suffer thus? Take us back, brother, to Madinah, the sacred monument of our noble grandfather; let us go home and live like queens in our own country."

Husain: "Oh my afflicted, distressed, tormented sister, would to God there were a way of escape for me! Notwithstanding they have cruelly cut down the cypress-like stature of my dear son Ali-Akbar; notwithstanding Kasim my lovely nephew tinged himself with his own blood; still they are intent to kill me also. They do not allow me to go back from Irak, nor do they let me turn elsewhere. They will neither permit me to go to India, nor the Capital of China. I cannot set out for the territory of Abyssinia, or take refuge in Zanzibar."

Zainab: "Oh, how am I vexed in my mind, dear brother, on hearing these sad things! May I die, rather than listen to such affecting words any more! What shall we, an assembly of desolate widows and orphans, do after thou art gone? Oh, how can we live?"

Husain: "Oh miserable creature, weep not now, nor be so very much upset; thou shalt cry plentifully hereafter owing to the wickedness of time. When the wicked Shimr; shall sever my head from the body; when thou shalt be made a captive prisoner, and forced to ride on an unsaddled camel; when my body shall be trampled under foot by the enemy's horses, and trodden

under their hoofs; when my beloved Sukainah shall be cruelly struck by Shimr, my wicked murderer; when they shall lead thee away captive from Karbala to *Sham; and when they shall make thee and others live there in a horrible, ruined place; yea, when thou shalt see all this, then thou mayest, and wilt verily, cry. But I admonish thee, sister, since this sad case has no remedy but patience, to resign the whole matter, submissively, to the Lord, the good Maker of all. Mourn not for my misfortune, but bear it patiently, without giving occasion to the enemy to rejoice triumphantly on this account, or speak reproachfully concerning us."

Kulsum: "Thou struttest about gaily, O Husain, thou beloved of my heart. Look a little behind thee; see how Kulsum is sighing after thee with tearful eyes! Let me put my head on the hoof of thy winged steed, Zul Janah."

Husain: "Beloved sister, kindle not a fire in my heart by so doing. Take away thy head from under the hoof of my steed. Oh thousand-noted nightingale, sing not such a sad-toned melody. I am going away; be thou the kind keeper of my helpless ones."

Kulsum: "Behold what the heaven have at length brought upon me! What they have done also to my brother! Him they have made to have parched lips through thirst, and me they have caused to melt into water, and gush out like

* i. e. — Syria.

tears from the eyes ! Harsh severity is mingled with tyrannous cruelty."

Husain : " Trials, afflictions and pains, the thicker they fall on man, dear sister, the better do they prepare him for his journey heavenward. We rejoice in tribulations, seeing they are but temporary, and yet they work out an eternal and blissful end. Though it is predestined that I should suffer martyrdom in this shameful manner, yet the treasury of everlasting happiness shall be at my disposal as a consequent reward. Thou must think of that, and be no longer sorry. The dust raised in the field of such battles is as highly esteemed by me, Oh sister, as the philosopher's stone was, in former times, by the alchemists ; and the soil of Karbala is the sure remedy of my inward pains."

Kulsum : " May I be sacrificed for thee ! Since the occurrence is thus inevitable, I pray thee describe to thy poor sister Kulsum her duty after thy death. Tell me, where shall I go, or in what direction set my face ? What am I to do and which of thy orphan children am I to caress most ?"

Husain : " Show thy utmost kindness, good sister, to Sukainah, my darling girl, for the pain of being fatherless is most severely felt by children too much fondled by their parents, especially girls. I have regard to all my children, to be sure, but I love Sukainah most."

Fizzah (an old Female Slave of Husain) :
" Dignified master, I am sick and weary in heart at

the bare idea of separation from thee. Have a kind regard to me, an old slave, much stricken with age! Master, by thy soul do I swear that I am altogether weary of life. I have grown old in thy service; pardon me, please, all the faults ever committed by me."

Husain: "Yes, thou hast served us, indeed, for a very long time. Thou hast shown much affection and love towards me and my children. Oh handmaid of my dear mother Fatimah! thou hast verily suffered much in our house; how often didst thou grind corn with thine own hand for my mother! Thou hast also handled Husain most caressingly in thy arms. Thou art blackfaced, that is true but thou hast, I opine, a pure white heart, and are much esteemed by us. Today I am about to leave thee, owing thee, at the same time, innumerable thanks for the good services thou hast performed; but I beg thy pardon for all inconsiderate actions on my part."

Fizzah: "May I be a sacrifice for thee, thou royal ruler of the capital of faith! Turn not my days black, like my face, thou benevolent master. Truly I have had many troubles on your behalf. How many nights have I spent in watchfulness at thy cradle! At one moment I would caress thee in my arms, at another I would fondle thee in my bosom. I became prematurely old by my diligent services, Oh Husain! Is it proper now that thou shouldst put round my poor neck the heavy chain of thy intolerable absence? Is this, dear master, the reward of the services I have done thee?"

Husain: "Though thy body, Oh heavenly maid, is now broken down by age and infirmity, yet thou hast served us all the days of thy life with sincerity and love; thou must know, therefore, that thy diligence and vigilance will never be disregarded by us. Excuse me today, when I am offering my body and soul in the cause of God, and cannot heal thee at all; but be sure I will pay the reward of thy service on the day of universal account."

Fizzah: "Dost thou remember, good sir, how many troubles I have suffered with thee for the dear sake of Ali Akbar, the light of thine eyes? Though I have not suckled him with my own breasts, to be sure, I laboured hard for him, till he reached the age of eighteen years and came here to Karbala. But, alas! dear flourishing Ali Akbar has been this day cruelly killed—what a pity! and I strove so much for his sake, yet all, as it were, in vain. Yea, what a sad loss!"

Husain: "Speak not of my Ali Akbar any more. Oh heavenly maiden, nor set fire to the granary of my patience and make it aflame. (Turning to his sister) Poor distressed Zainab, have the goodness to be kind always to my mother's old maid, for she experienced many troubles in our family; she has laboured hard in training Ali Akbar, my son."

Umm Lailah (the mother of Ali Akbar):
"The elegant stature of my Akbar fell on the

ground; like a beautiful cypress tree it was forcibly felled! Alas for the memory of thy upright stature! Alas Oh my youthful son of handsome form and appearance! Alas my troubles at night-time for thee! How often did I watch thy bed, singing lullabies for thee until the morning! How sweet is the memory of those times! yea, how pleasant the very thought of those days! Alas! where art thou, dear child? Oh thou who art ever remembered by me, come and see thy mother's wretched condition, come!"

Husain: (not knowing that it is Umm Lailah who is crying): "Oh Lord, why is this mournful voice so affecting? Me thinks the owner of it, the bemoaning person, has a flame in her heart. It resembles the doleful tone of a lapwing whose wings are burned! like as when a miraculous lapwing, the companion of Solomon the wise, the king of God's holy people, received intelligence suddenly about the death of its royal guardian!"

Umm Lailah: "Again I am put in mind of my dear son! Oh my heart, melted into blood, pour thyself forth! Dear son, whilst thou wast alive, I had some honour and respect, every body had some regard for me; but since thou art gone, I am altogether abandoned. Woe be to me! I am despised and rejected. Woe unto me!"

Husain: (addressing Umm Lailah): "Do not set fire to the harvest of my soul any further. Husain is, before God, greatly ashamed of his

shortcomings towards thee. Come out from the tent, for it is the last meeting previous to separating from one another for ever; thy distress is an additional weight to the heavy burden of my grief.

Umm Lailah : "I humbly state. Oh glory of all ages, that I did not expect from thy saintship that thou wouldst disregard thy handmaid in such a way. Thou dost show thy kind regard and favour to all except me. Dost thou not remember my sincere services done to thee? Am I not by birth a descendant of the glorious kings of Persia, brought as a captive to Arabia when the former Emirs fell and gave place to the newborn monarchy of the latter kingdom? The Judge, the living Creator, was pleased to grant me an offspring, whom we called Ali Akbar, this day lost to us for ever. May I be offered for thee! While Ali Akbar my son was alive, I had indeed a sort of esteem and credit with thee; but now that my cypress, my newly-sprung-up cedar, is unjustly felled, I have fallen off from credit too, and must therefore shed tears."

Husain : "Be it known unto thee, Oh, thou violet of the flower-garden of modesty, that thou art altogether mistaken. I swear by the holy enlightened dust of my mother Zahrah's grave, that thou art more honourable now than ever. I well remember the affectionate recommendations of Ali Akbar, our son, concerning thee. How much he was mindful of thee at the moment of his parting! How tenderly he cared for thee and spoke concerning thee to every one of his family."

Umm Lailah: "Oh gracious Lord, I adjure thee by the merit of my son, Ali Akbar, never to lessen the shadow of Husain over my head. May no one ever be in my miserable condition—never be a desolate, homeless woman like me!"

Husain: "Oh thou unfortunate Zainab, my sister, the hour of separation is come! The day of joy is gone for ever! the night of affliction has drawn near! Drooping, withering sister, yet most blest in thy temper, I have a request for thee which I fear to make known."

Zainab: "May I be a sacrifice for the heart, thou moon-faced, glorious son, there is nobody here, if thou hast a private matter to disclose to thy sister."

Husain: "Dear unfortunate sister, who art already severely vexed in heart, if I tell thee what my request is what will be thy condition then? Though I cannot restrain myself from speaking, still I am in doubt as to which is better, to speak or to forbear."

Zainab: "My breast is pierced! My heart boils within me like a cauldron owing to this thy conversation. Thou soul of thy sister, hold not back from Zainab what thou hast in thy mind".

Husain: "My poor sister, I am covered with shame before thee, I cannot lift up my head. Though the request is a trifle, yet I know it is

grievous to thee to grant. It is this ; bring me an old, dirty, ragged garment to put on. But do not ask me. I pray thee, the reason why, until I myself think proper to tell thee."

Zainab: "I am now going to the tent to fetch thee what thou seekest ; but I am utterly astonished brother, as to why thou dost want this loathsome thing. (Returning with a tattered shirt). Take it, here is the ragged robe for which thou didst ask. I wonder what thou wilt do with it."

Husain: "Do not remain here, dear sister. Go for a while to thine own tent ; for if thou see that which I am about to do, thou wilt be grievously disturbed. Turn to thy tent, poor miserable sister, listen to what I say, and leave me, I pray thee, alone."

Zainab: (going away) "I am gone, but I am sorry I cannot tell what this enigma means. It is puzzling indeed. Remain thou with thy mysterious garment, Oh Hussein ! may all of us be offered as a ransom for thee, dear brother. Thou art without any to assist or befriend thee ! Thou art surrounded by the wicked enemy ! Yes, thy kind helpers have all been killed by the unbelieving nation !"

Husain: (putting on the garment) "The term of life has no perpetual duration in itself. Whoever saw in a flower-garden a rose without

its thorn ! I will put on this old robe close to my skin, and place over it my new apparel, though neither the old nor the new of this world can be depended on. I hope Zainab has not been observing what I have been doing, for, poor creature, she can scarcely bear the sight of any such like thing."

Zainab: "Alas ! I do not know what is the matter with Husain, my brother. What an old garment has to do with being a king? Dost thou desire, O Husain, that the enemy should come to know this thing and reproach thy sister about it? Put off, I pray thee, this old ragged garment, otherwise I shall pull off my head dress and uncover my head for shame."

Husain: "Rend not thy dress, modest daughter of the Lady of the Paradise, nor pull off thy head-covering. There is a mystery involved in my action. Know that what Husain has done has a good meaning in it. His putting on an old garment is not without signification."

Zainab: "What mystery can be in this work, thou perfect high priest of faith? I will never admit any until thou shalt have fully explained the thing according to my capacity."

Husain: "Today, dear sister, Shimr will behave cruelly towards me. He will sever my dear head from the body. His dagger not cutting my throat, he will be obliged to sever my head

from behind. After he has killed me, when he begins to strip me of my clothes, he may perchance be ashamed to take off this ragged robe and thereby leave my body naked on the ground."

Zainab: "Oh Lord, have mercy on my distracted heart! Thou alone art aware of the state of my mind. Gracious Creator, preserve the soul of Husain! Let not heaven pull down my house over me!"

Sukainah: "Dear Father, by our Lord it is a painful thing to be fatherless; a misery, a great calamity to be helpless, bleeding in the heart, and an outcast! Dismount from the saddle, and make me sit by thy side. To pass over me or neglect me at such a time is very distressing. Let me put my head on thy dear lap, oh father. It is said thou shouldst not be aware of thy dear child's condition."

Husain: "Bend not thy neck on one side, thou my beloved child; nor weep so sadly, like an orphan. Neither moan so melodiously like a disconsolate nightingale. Come, lay thy dear head on my knees once more, and shed not so copiously a flood of tears from thine eyes, thou spirit of my life."

Sukainah: "Dear father, thou whose lot is but grief, have mercy on me, mercy! Oh thou my physician in every pain and trouble have pity on me! have pity on me! Alas! my heart, for

the mention of the word separation ! Alas, my grievance, for what is unbearable."

Husain: "Groan not, wail not, my dear Sukainah, my poor oppressed, distressed girl. Go to thy tent and sleep soundly in thy bed until thy father gets thee some water to drink. "

Zainab: "Alas! Alas! woe to me! my Husain is gone from me! Alas! the arrow of my heart is shot away from the hand. Woe unto me, a thousand woes! I am to remain without Husain! The worshipper of the truth is gone to meet his destined fate with a blood stained shroud. "

Husain: "My disconsolate Zainab, be not so impatient. My homeless sister, show not thyself so fretful. Have patience, sister, the reward of patient believers is the best of all. Render God thanks, the crown of intercession is fitted for our head only."

Zainab: "Oh my afflicted mother, thou best of all women, pass a minute by these in Karbala! see thy daughters prisoners of sorrow! behold them amidst strangers and foreigners. Come out a while from thy Pavilion in Paradise, Oh Fatimah, and weep affectionately over the state of us, thy children."

Husain: "I have become friendless and without any helper, in a most strange manner. I have lost my troop and army in a wonderful way.

Where is Akbar, my son? Let him come to me and hold the bridle of my horse, that I may mount. Where is Kasim my nephew? Will he not help me get ready my stirrup to make me cheerful? Why should I not shed much blood from mine eyes seeing I cannot behold my standard-bearer? A brother is for the day of misfortune and calamity! A brother is better than a hundred diadems and thrones! A brother is the essence of life in the world! He who has a brother, though he be old, yet is young. Who is there to bring my horse for me? There is none even to weep for me in this state of misery!"

Kulsum: "Because there is no Ali Akbar, dear brother, to help thee, Zainab, thy sister, will hold the horse for thee; and seeing Abbas thy brother, is no longer to be found, I myself will bear the standard before thy winged steed instead of him."

Zainab: "Let Zainab mourn bitterly for her brother's desolation. Whoever saw a woman, a gentlewoman, doing the duty of a groom or servants? Who can know. Oh Lord, besides Thee, the said state of Husain in Karbala, where his people so deserted him that a woman like myself is obliged to act a servant for him."

Kulsum: "I am a standard-bearer for Husain, the martyr of Karbala, Oh Lord God. I am the sister of Abbas; yea, the miserable sister of both. Oh friends, it being the tenth day of

Moharram, I am therefore assisting Husain. I am bearing the ensign for him instead of Abbas his standard-bearer."

Zainab: "Uncover your breasts a minute, Oh, ye tear-shedding people, for it is time to beat the drum, seeing the king is going to ride. Oh Solomon the prophet, where is thy glory? What has become of thy pompous retinue? Where are thy brothers, nephews and companions?"

Husain: "There is none left to help me. My sister Zainab holds the bridle of the horse, and walks before me. Who ever saw a lady acting thus?"

Zainab: "Thou art going alone! May the souls of all be a ransom for thee! and may thy departure make souls quit their bodies! A resurrection will be produced in thy tent by the cry of orphans and widows."

Husain: "Though it grieves me to go, yet I do it; peradventure I may see the face of Asghar and the countenance of Akbar, those cypresses, those roses of Paradise."

Zainab: "Would to God Zainab had died this very minute before thy face, in thy sight, that she might not behold such elegant bodies, such beautiful forms, rolling in their own blood!"

Husain: "Oh poor sister, if thou die here in this land in that sudden way that thou desirest,

then who will ride in thy stead, in the city of Kufah, on the camel's back? "

Zainab: "Slight not my pain, dear brother, for Zainab is alarmed as to the import of thy speech. What shall I do with thy family—with the poor widows and young children. "

Husain: "Oh afflicted one, it is decreed I should be killed by means of daggar and swords; henceforth, dear sister, thou shalt not see me. Behold, this is separation between me and thee!"

The Darwish of Kabul: "Oh Lord God, wherefore is the outward appearance of a man of God usually without decoration or ornament? And why is the lap of the man of this world generally full of gold and jewels? Oh what account is the pillow of this great person the black dust of the road? And for what reason are the bed and cushions of the rebellious made of velvet and stuffed with down? Either Islam, the religion of peace and charity, has no true foundation in the world, or this young man, who is wounded and suffers from thirst, is still an infidel."

Husain: "Why are thine eyes pouring down tears, young Darwish? Hast thou also lost an Akbar in the prime of his youth? Thou art immersed, as a water-fowl, in thy tears. Has thine Abbas been slain, thirsting, on the bank of the river Euphrates, that thou cryest so piteously? But if thou art sad only on account of my mis-

fortune, then it matters not. Let me know whence comest thou, and whither is thy face set ? ”

The Darwish: “ It happened, young man, that last night I arrived in this valley, and made my lodging there. When one-half of the night had passed, of a sudden great difficulty befell me, for I heard a child bemoaning and complaining of thirst, having given up altogether the idea of living any longer in this world. Sometimes it would beat its head and cry out for water; at other times it appeared to fall on the ground, fainting and motionless. I have, therefore, brought some water in this cup for that poor child, that it may drink and be refreshed a little. So I humbly beg thee, dear sir, to direct me to the place where the young child may be found, and tell me what is its name.”

Husain: “ Oh God let no man be ever in my pitiful condition, nor any family in this sad and deplorable state to which I am reduced. Oh young man, the child mentioned by thee is the peace of my troubled mind ; it is my poor, miserable little girl.”

The Darwish: “ May I be offered for thee, dear sir, for thy tearful eyes ! Why should thy daughter be so sadly mourning and complaining ? My heart is overwhelmed with grief for the abundance of tears running down thy cheeks. Why should the daughter of one like thee, a generous soul, suffer from thirst ? ”

Husain: "Know, Oh young man that we are never in need of the water of this life. Thou art quite mistaken if thou hast supposed us to be of this world. If I will I can make the moon, or any other celestial orb, fall down on the earth; how much more can I get water for my children. Look at the hollow made in the ground with my spear; water would gush out of it if I were to like.

The Darwish: "What is thy name Sir? I perceive that thou art one of the chief saints of the most beneficent God whose descriptions appear ostensibly in all the revealed scriptures including Torah, Zabur & Furkan. It is befitting for the Great Solomon, the Apostle of Most High to bow down before thy glory. It is evident to me that thou art the brightness of the Lord's image, but I cannot tell to which sacred garden thy holy rose belongs."

Husain: "Oh Darwish, thou wilt soon be informed of the whole matter, for thou shalt be a martyr thyself; for thy plans and the result thereof have been revealed to me. Tell me, Oh Darwish, what is the end thou hast in view in thy hazardous enterprise? When thou shalt have told me that, I will disclose to thee who I am."

The Darwish: "I intend, noble sir, after I have known the mystery of thy affairs. to set out, if God wills, from Karbala to Najaf namely, to the place where Ali, the highly exalted king of religion,

the sovereign lord of the empire of existence, the supreme master of all the Darwishes, is buried. Yes, I am going to visit the tomb of Ali, the successor of the chosen of God, the son-in-law of the Prophet, the lion of the true Lord, the prince of believers, Haidar, the champion of faith."

Husain: "But is it known unto thee, Oh Darwish, that I, who am so sad and sorrowful, am the rose of the garden of that prince? I am of the family of the believers thou hast just mentioned. I am Husain the intercessor on the Day of, Resurrection, the rose of the garden of glory."

The Darwish: "May I be offered a sacrifice for thy blessed arrival! Pardon me my fault, and give me permission to fight the battle of faith for I am weary of life. It is better for me to be killed, and be delivered at once from so many vexations of spirit. Martyrdom is, in fact, one of the glories of my faith."

Hussein: "Go forth, Oh atom, which aspires to the glory of the sun; go forth, thou hast become at last worthy to know the hidden mysteries of faith. He who is slain for the sake of Husain shall have an abundant reward from God; yea 'he shall be raised to life with Ali Akbar the sweet son of Husain'."

The Darwish (addressing Husain's antagonists): "You cruel people have no religion. You

are fire-worshippers ignorant of God and His Law. How long will you act unjustly towards the offspring of the priesthood? Is the account of the day of Resurrection all false?"

Ibn Saad (the general of Yazid's army): "Oh ye brave soldiers of Yazid, deprive this fellow of his fund of life. Make his friends ready to mourn for him."

Husain: "Is there anyone to help me? Is there any assistant to lend me his aid?"

Jaffer (the King of Jinns, with his troops, coming to Husain's assistance): "Oh King of men and Jinn, Oh Husain, peace be on thee! Oh judge of corporal and spiritual beings, peace be on thee!"

Husain: "On thee be peace, thou handsome youth! Who art thou, that salutest us at such a time? Though thy affairs are not hidden from me at all, still it is advisable to ask thy name."

Jaffer: "Oh Lord of men and Jinn, I am the least of thy servants, and my name is Jaffer, the chief ruler of all the tribes of Jinn. To-day, while I was sitting on the glorious throne of my majesty, easy in mind, without any sad idea or thought whatever, I suddenly heard thy voice, when thou didst sadly implore assistance; and on hearing thee I lost my patience and senses. And, behold, I have come out with troops of Jinn, of

various abilities and qualifications, to lend thee help if necessary."

Husain : " In the old abbey of this perishable kingdom, none can ever, Oh Jaffer, attain to immortality. What can I do with the empire of the world, or its tempting glories, after my dear ones have all died and gone? Is it proper that I, an old man, should live, and Akbar, a blooming youth, die in the prime of age? Return thou Jaffer, to thy home, and weep for me as much as thou canst."

Jaffer (returning): " Alas for Husain's exile and helplessness! Alas for his continual groans and sighs."

Husain (coming back from the field, dismounts his horse, and making a heap of dust, lays his head on it.): " Oh earth of Karbala, do thou assist me, I pray! since I have no mother, be thou to me instead of one."

Ibn Saad (orders the army to stone Husain.) "Oh, ye men of valour, Husain, the son of Ali, has tumbled down from the winged horse; if I be not mistaken, heaven has fallen on earth! It is better for you to stone him most cruelly. Dispatch him soon, with stones, to his companions."

Husain : " Ah, woe to me! my forehead is broken; blood runs down my luminous face."

Ibn Saad : " Who is that brave soldier who, in order to show his gratitude to Yazid, his

sovereign Lord, will step forward and, with a blow of his scimitar, slay Husain, the son of Ali?"

Shimr: "I am he whose dagger is famous for bloodshed. My mother has borne me for this work alone. I care not about the conflict of the Day of Judgment; I am a worshipper of Yazid, and have no fear of God. I can make the great throne of the Lord to shake and tremble. I alone can sever from the body the head of Husain the son of Ali. I am he who has no share in Islam. I will strike the chest of Husain, the ark of God's knowledge, with my boots, without any fear of punishment."

Husain: "Oh, how wounds caused by arrows and daggers do smart! Oh God, have mercy on the Day of Judgment on my people for my sake. The time of death has arrived, but I have not my Akbar with me, Oh Lord God, besides Husain who has happened to be thus situated, every one when he dies has at least a mother at his head. But my mother is not here to rend her garments for me: she is not alive, that she might close my eyes when I die."

Fatimah (his mother appearing): "I am come to see thee, my child, my child! May die another time! How shall I see thee slain, rolling in thine own blood, my child, my child!"

Husain: "Come dear mother, I am anxiously waiting for thee. Come, Come! I have

partly to complain of thee. How is that thou hast altogether forsaken thy son? How is that thou camest so late to visit me?"

Fatimah : "May I be offered for thy wounded, defaced body! Tell me, what dost thou wish thy mother to do now for thee?"

Husain : "I am now mother, at the point of death. The ark of the life is going to be cast on shore, mother. It is time that my soul should leave the body. Come, mother, close my eyes with thy kind hands."

Fatimah : "O Lord, how difficult for a mother to see a dear child dying! I am Zahrah who am making this sad noise, because I have to close the eyes of my son Husain, who is on the point of death. Oh, tell me if thou hast any desire long cherished in thy heart, for I am distressed in mind owing to thy sad sighs!"

Husain : "Go mother, my soul is come to my throat; I had no other desire except one, with which I must die and rise on the Day of Resurrection, namely, to see Ali Akbar's wedding."

Shimr : "Make thy confession for I want to sever thy head, and cause a perpetual separation between it and the body."

Zainab : "Oh Shimr, do not go beyond thy limit; let me bind something on my brother's eyes."

Husain: "Go to thy tent, sister, I am already undone, go away, Zahrah, my mother has already closed my eyes, show to Sukainah my daughter, always the tenderness of a mother. Be very kind to my child after me."

Shimr (addressing Husain): "Stretch forth thy feet toward the Holy Kaba, the sacred temple of Mecca. See how my dagger waves over thee! It is time to cut the throat."

Husain: "Oh Lord, for the merit of me, dear child of thy Prophet; Oh Lord, for the sad groanings of my miserable sister; Oh Lord for the sake of young Abbas rolling in his blood, even that young brother of mine that was equal to my soul, I pray Thee, on the Day of Judgment, I submit to Thy will alone as I sacrificed everything for Thy sake."

N. B.—The whole chapter of *Al-Widaa* is not so much authentic. Old authoritative historians do not attach importance to the above lines. Mostly it is a semi-imaginary interpretation.

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